



# GUARDIAN OF PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE

January 11, 2013

## News & Articles

### **Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act Reauthorization Passes U.S. House of Representatives**

On Dec. 19, H.R. 6672, the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Reauthorization Act (PAHPA), passed the U.S. House of Representatives by a vote of 383-16. The reauthorization legislation was supported by the National Association of County & City Health Officials (NACCHO), the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO), the American Public Health Association (APHA), and the Trust for America's Health (TFAH). These organizations sent joint letters to congress supporting the legislation and urging the inclusion of certain provisions essential to keeping communities safe, such as the temporary redeployment of federally funded personnel during a public health emergency, reauthorization of the Public Health and Emergency Preparedness Grants and the Hospital Preparedness Program, and children's preparedness initiatives.

[H.R.6672](#)

[Joint House letter](#)

### **FDA Approves Raxibacumab to Treat Inhalational Anthrax**

On December 14, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved raxibacumab injection to treat inhalational anthrax, a form of the infectious disease caused by breathing in the spores of the bacterium *Bacillus anthracis*. Raxibacumab is a new anthrax treatment that would supplement antibiotics to treat the effects of the toxins produced by anthrax pathogens. It is the first new countermeasure to anthrax developed since 2001. This marks the first time the FDA has approved a drug developed through the federal government's Project BioShield program. Read the FDA's announcement [HERE](#). Read the article on Global Security Newswire [HERE](#).

### **HHS Offers Forecasts on Medical Countermeasures**

In December, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services released the 2012 Public Health Emergency Medical Countermeasures (PHEMCE) Implementation Plan. This report offers predictions on when new countermeasures against biological threats will become available. [MORE>>](#)

### **Text Messaging for Public Health Emergencies**

Researchers at the Northwest Center for Public Health Practice at the University of Washington studied the feasibility of using text messaging as an effective communication mechanism during public health emergencies. Several research publications and products are highlighted. [MORE>>](#)

### **With New Rules, Few Public Health Labs to Handle Riskiest Agents**

According to the Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL) and officials with state labs, few state public health laboratories plan to maintain stocks of certain pathogens that could be used in a bioterrorist attack due to more stringent security requirements set to take effect in April, 2013.

### **Emergency Preparedness and Public Health: The Lessons of Hurricane Sandy**

This paper, by Tia Powell of Montefiore Medical Center, Dan Hafling of Inova Health System, and Lawrence O. Gostin of Georgetown University Law Center, evaluates criteria used to guide evacuation decisions for patient facilities during Hurricane Sandy with a look back at Hurricane Katrina. It identifies these decisions, overwhelmed infrastructure, and major delays in returning to normal functioning as the central public health challenge of a storm. The paper recommends new actions for policy makers and encourages public officials to decide in collaboration with facilities whether to shelter in place or risk transfer of fragile patients. The research report can be found [HERE](#).

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### **Secretary Napolitano Announces Recipients of the 2012 Rick Rescorla National Award for Resilience**

Jane Cage, Chair of the Citizens Advisory Recovery Team (CART) and the citizens of Joplin, Missouri have been awarded the Rick Rescorla National Award for Resilience. The award recognizes the community's contributions following the tornadoes that struck Joplin in May, 2011. [MORE>>](#)

### **Improving Preparedness through Sharing Public Health and Homeland Security Information**

An issue brief produced by the National Governors Association examines how states can consolidate and combine programs to avoid duplication of efforts while improving situational awareness of emerging threats and disaster response. [MORE>>](#)

## **Research**

### **Preventing Pandemics via International Development: A Systems Approach**

Researchers in PLoS Medicine study the current public health structure and how to improve it to prevent influenza pandemics. They determined the drivers of pandemics which included 13 different factors. Some of the factors included: breakdown of public health measures, climate and weather, and international travel and commerce. From this they concluded that in order to prevent pandemics there are three policy issues that need to be addressed: develop policies that deal with different stages of emergence from spillover and localized outbreaks to pandemic spread; development agencies should actively engage a systems approach to pandemic prevention that changes pathogen dynamics at the intersection of people and their environment, broadening the development toolkit significantly and imaginatively; and address the need for a critical shift in the funding framework from which disease-oriented development assistance is administered. The full article is available online. [MORE>>](#)

### **The Age Distribution of Mortality Due to Influenza: Pandemic and Peri-Pandemic**

In BMC Medicine researchers explore the phenomenon of younger people being more affected by pandemic influenza than seasonal influenza, and why older adults are spared. They estimated the age-specific excess mortality rates for the years within the 20th century that data was available for Australia, Canada, France, Japan, the UK, and the USA for people older than 44 years old. The attack rates for four 20th Century influenza pandemics were compared. The research showed that the oldest adults were affected right after the emergence of a new pandemic virus. Younger people were more affected after this period. The attack rates for the pandemic viruses varied slightly by country, but stayed mostly the same for each of the pandemic periods. The full study is available online. [MORE>>](#)

### **The Role of Veterans Affairs in Emergency Management: A Systematic Literature Review**

Researchers in PLoS Currents Disasters review the literature to explore the role of veterans' affairs in disasters. They looked at 41 published, peer-reviewed articles that address veterans' affairs and emergency management. Researchers found that the articles addressed five topics: mental health status and services use, effects of disaster on general health services use, patient tracking, evacuation, and disaster planning/preparation. They concluded that most of the study designs were pre-experimental and the literature would benefit from more experimental and mixed-methods designs. The topic of evacuation required more evidence-based research. Overall they found that more research is needed on the role of veterans' affairs in disasters to get a clearer picture of their influence. The full article is available online. [MORE>>](#)

## **"Right Time, Right Place" Health Communication on Twitter: Value and Accuracy of Location Information**

In the Journal of Medical Internet Research, researchers study the applicability of twitter location data for use in public health. They gathered location data directly from Twitter using its application programming interface (API). One percent of the total tweets (23.8 million tweets from 9.5 million unique users) over a 2- week period in October and November 2011 were analyzed. Frequencies for each of the location options were calculated to determine the prevalence of the various location data options by region of the world, time zone, and state within the United States. Data from the US Census Bureau were also compiled to determine population proportions in each state, and Pearson correlation coefficients were used to compare each state's population with the number of Twitter users who enable the GPS location option. The research showed only 2.02% of the tweets gathered contained location data. There was a high level of correlation between the location data and the text of the tweet. They concluded that most tweets do not contain location data and more research needs to be done on ways of mining location from the text. The full study is available online. [MORE>>](#)

## **Lessons from the History of Quarantine, from Plague to Influenza A**

In Emerging Infectious Diseases, a medical historian describes the use of a centuries old public health tool, quarantine. Beginning with one of the earliest disease outbreaks of the "black death" in the 1300's up through history to more recent disease outbreaks of SARS and pandemic influenza, the author asserts that quarantine is still a tool that can be used by public health even though its use can be controversial. The full article is available online. [MORE>>](#)

# **The Michigan Update**

## **Region 5 Exercises Essential Component of Regional Preparedness**

In late December, Operation "Polar Express" tested the readiness of a Kalamazoo area medical clinic to receive patients from a simulated train crash. The exercise engaged regularly used alerting systems and the region's Regional Medical Coordinating Center (RMCC) to carry out a plan to use the clinic as a treatment center for mock patients with minor injuries. During the unannounced exercise, the Western Michigan University School of Medicine clinics received a dozen mock "patients" with multiple minor injuries and associated behavioral trauma over a short period of time. The "patients" were cared for in addition to the clinic's regular patient load and daily business activity during the one-hour exercise.



The exercise began with a regional MI-HAN "alert" stating that the Polar Express train had crashed, resulting in approximately 250 victims. Shortly thereafter, a Multi-Casualty Incident (MCI) alert was provided through EMResource to all Region 5 hospitals and Neighborhood Emergency Help Centers (NEHC) in the region, which use EMResource as a means to maintain healthcare situational awareness and share essential elements of information related to both daily events and emergency incidents. Recipients were asked update their status/availability to receive patients. Two Kalamazoo NEHC's responded to the request.

For the purpose of the exercise, area hospitals were also asked to report their ability to handle patients of various levels of acuity. In addition the Michigan Volunteer Registry was used to gauge the availability of medical volunteers within the 5th District. More than two dozen regional volunteers indicated their availability to assist. This was nearly one quarter of those queried.

The NEHC fulfills a critical aspect of large-scale incident management and readiness for multi-casualty incidents. These facilities, which provide primary care and clinic services on a daily basis, are facilities that have agreed to aid in the management of multi-casualty incidents by receiving and treating low acuity patients transported from the incident scene. This lessens the number of patients arriving at area hospitals and effectively enables the hospital facilities to deal with more critically ill or injured patients. Patients are triaged at the incident scene and those identified as minor or "green" may be loaded onto buses or other vehicles that can accommodate multiple victims for transport to the NEHCs for evaluation and treatment. As patients are evaluated at the NEHC, those who need more care than can be provided are transferred to a hospital for more extensive evaluation and treatment. NEHCs are a component of Michigan's Modular Emergency Medical System (MEMS).

In addition to the participation of the clinics, the RMCC, and simulated "patients" from Kalamazoo Valley Community College's EMS programs and Oshtemo Township Fire Department, the exercise was supported by the Kalamazoo Department of Health and Human Services and the Kalamazoo County Office of Emergency Management. In total, approximately 45 people participated in the exercise, including physicians, nurses and other clinical staff, facility support personnel and regional preparedness staff.

## **Tools & Resources**

### **Resources on Active Shooter Incidents**

The U.S. Fire Administration library has a comprehensive compilation of resources on planning for, responding to or recovering from active shooter incidents. Available materials are drawn from federal, state and local governments as well as non-governmental organizations, and professional and scholarly publications. [MORE>>](#)

### **IS 907: Active Shooter: What You Can Do FEMA Training for Non-Law Enforcement**

An active shooter is an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and other populated area. In most cases, active shooters use firearms and there is no pattern or method to their selection of victims. Active shooter situations are unpredictable and evolve quickly. All employees can help prevent and prepare for potential active shooter situations. This course provides guidance to individuals, including managers and employees, so that they can prepare to respond to an active shooter situation. This course is written for non-law enforcement employees. The material may provide law enforcement officers information on recommended actions for non-law enforcement employees to take should they be confronted with an active shooter situation. [MORE>>](#)

### **Preparing for Bioterrorism: The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation's Leadership in Biosecurity**

The Center for Biosecurity at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center published a book that outlines the role of Alfred P. Sloan Foundation grants in the creation of biosecurity in the U.S. The book covers many of the advances that took place since the funding began in 2000. The advances include: influenza pandemic preparedness, increased disease surveillance capabilities, and the change in public health law and policy. The full book is available online. [MORE>>](#)

## **Training & Events**

**Webinar: Introducing NCFPD's Food Protection Tools for 2013**  
**January 11, 2013**  
**11:00-12noon (EST)**

This webinar will highlight four tools recently developed by the National Center for Food Protection and Defense for use by food defense customers. For more information and to register, click [HERE](#).

**Teen P.R.E.P. (Prepare, Respond, Educate, Practice)**

The Oakland County Health Division, in collaboration with the Novi Public Library, will be hosting youth emergency preparedness training classes. These one hour classes will cover the basics of emergency preparedness planning and include information as to what should be added to an emergency food supply kit, and an emergency car kit. Both classes include a hands-on opportunity to build a Go-Kit. TEEN P.R.E.P. offers a chance for youth to have an open discussion about what it means to be prepared, and what they can do to help their families prepare for an emergency. For more information and to register, click [HERE](#).

Date: Thursday, January 17, 2013

Time: 6:30-7:30PM

Grades: 5-8

Price: Free Community Event

Registration Begins: December 10, 2012

Registration Ends: When program is filled

Location: East Meeting Room at the Novi Public Library

Date: Tuesday, February 19 & 26, 2013

Time: 3-4PM

Grades: 9-12

Price: Free Community Event

Registration Begins: December 10, 2012

Registration Ends: When program is filled

Location: East Meeting Room at the Novi Public Library

**ICS 300/400 Courses**

**January 22-23, 2013, 8am-5pm (ICS 300)**

**January 24-25, 2013, 8am-5pm (ICS 400)**

**Wayne Activity and Banquet Center - Wayne, MI**

Region 2 South is hosting ICS 300 and 400. These ICS courses provide training on and resources for personnel who require advanced application of the ICS and expand upon information covered in the ICS 100 and 200 courses. These are both sixteen-hour courses geared toward individuals who may assume a supervisory role in an expanding incident. For more information and to register, go to: <http://portal.2south.org> (type or copy/paste this link into your web browser). Click "sign in" in the upper right corner of the page and enter the following username and password:

Username: 2south@2south.org

Password: 2south

Please note: seating may be limited.

**Webinar: Working Together: Federal Plans for Medical Countermeasure Use in Public Health Emergencies & Their Impact on the Public Health Community**

**January 28, 2013**

**1:00-2:00pm (EST)**

Hosted by the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) and the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR), this webinar is designed to increase knowledge about the Public Health Emergency Medical Countermeasure Enterprise (PHEMCE) and its recently released 2012 PHEMCE Strategy and Implementation Plan. The featured presenter is the Senior Science Advisor to the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response, George W. Korch, Jr., Ph.D., who will provide an overview of the PHEMCE and current federal plans for ensuring medical countermeasure preparedness. He will specifically be highlighting

the areas where these federal plans may intersect and impact state and local health department planning. For more information and to register, click [HERE](#).

### **2013 Climate & Health Symposium**

**January 30-31, 2013**

**Washington, DC**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) "Extreme Weather, Climate, and Health: Putting Science into Practice" Symposium in Washington, DC will allow leading public health researchers and practitioners to share information and experiences, and will bring new insight to public health issues related to extreme weather and the changing climate. The meeting will also stimulate greater collaboration and understanding among public health research and practice communities, creating an evidenced-based, "end to end" approach to addressing public health challenges associated with climate and extreme weather. The Association of State and Territorial Health Officials is offering a limited number of travel scholarships, for additional information about the symposium or the scholarships, please contact Abraham Kulungara, at [akulungara@astho.org](mailto:akulungara@astho.org).

### **Mass Antibiotic Dispensing: Public Information Communication Training**

**February 22, 2013**

**Taylor, MI (Wayne County)**

The Wayne County Department of Public Health is sponsoring a one-day PIC workshop. This interactive, scenario-base course focuses on developing messages, methods, and materials necessary for disseminating information to specific audiences before, during and after a public health emergency. This program has a limited number of available seats. For more information contact:

Carl R. Just

Emergency Preparedness Risk Communications Coordinator

Wayne County Department of Public Health

Office: 734-727-7293

Cell: 734-890-6717

[cjust@co.wayne.mi.us](mailto:cjust@co.wayne.mi.us)

### **2013 Michigan Epidemiology Conference**

**March 29, 2013**

**Ann Arbor, MI**

Mark your calendars for the 12th annual Michigan Epidemiology Conference to be held at the University of Michigan, School of Public Health in Ann Arbor, MI. The conference will feature keynote speakers and plenary sessions focusing on contemporary issues in epidemiology. Abstracts for presentations are being accepted. For more information, click [HERE](#). Interested exhibitors, contact Tiffany Henderson at (517) 887-4615 or [HendersonT1@michigan.gov](mailto:HendersonT1@michigan.gov)



#### *Mailing Address:*

*Office of Public Health Preparedness*

*Capitol View Building - 201 Townsend Street - Lansing, MI 48913*

*(517) 335-8150 — <http://www.michigan.gov/ophp>*

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